l: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

In their country there
524 are big nasty yellow-brown hornets (a kind of Belonogaster)
536 which build more or less circular nests, sometimes attaining to the size of a man's head. On a certain day the boys decide to make war on these enemies. They make shields with the leaves of the *nala* palm tree which they plait together.

524 They cut down branches, which they wave to protect themselves, and one of them goes and strikes a heavy blow on the wasps' nest! The irritated insects rush out on their assailants and sting them. The boys try to kill the wasps with their sticks or to crush them when they light on them. Sometimes, overcome by the pain, they run away; sometimes, resisting to the last, they kill and exterminate their winged enemies.

Besides this there are also *big battles between the shepherds* of the different flocks. The shepherds amuse themselves by taking one another's cattle. Those who are the strongest bring the stolen herd triumphantly back to the neighbourhood of their village, but they would never let it enter the kraal. The vanquished call to their help their elder brothers, who come to recover their property and, if they can, give the thieves a sound thrashing!

578 Insults and fights are frequent between the clans. The boys
762 of Mpfumu call out to those of Matjolo: " Forest gadders! Eaters
991 of snails and boas, of lizards and tortoises " (all of which are questionable food!) (In Ronga: Balala! Badi ba tihumba ni tinhlaru ni makhwahle ni tinfutchu). Those of Matjolo answer them: " Crowd of women that you are, clad in cotton material! " (Babasati! Matchimbamphela!), in reference to the fact that the inhabitants of Mpfumu, living near the town, some time ago replaced the belt of skins worn by the savages by a piece of cotton tied to the waist and hanging down to the knee (ladula).

855 The custom of frightening children with imaginary beasts is
857 wide spread amongst the Thongas. The bogey man is called
638 *Shingomu-Ngomu* or else *Shikunkumunu*, and by this very expressive
761 word they designate a huge and mighty being who walks, swaying his big body from right to left, with a sound like *ngomu-ngomu*. The ogre is *Shitukulumukumba*, a word coming originally from the Zulus, which corresponds to the Ronga *Ñwambilutimhokora*, that is to say: " the one who has scales on the heart. " He eats

585 578 girls, the stout women with strong arms, go and look for the heroine of the day, who is hidden in a hut in one of the neighbouring villages, and who has not yet been seen. At last they succeed in finding her. She refuses to come. The viragos seize her and pull her out by force. Everybody assembles. She is covered with a large cloth which hides her from the gaze of the bystanders. Surrounded on all sides, she sets forward to the village, the crowd forming a kind of procession. " Let us accompany her, then we shall return home " sing the women who bring her. (A hi mu tjekeleni, hi ta muka). This song of the *tjeka*, the only one which is peculiar to the wedding day, is the prelude to a most strange duel.

The bridegroom's family stands on one side, that of the bride on the other, and then begins the exchange of equivocal compliments.

"Ha!" cry the groomsmen to the bride, "as you are becoming the wife of our brother and coming into our village, try and leave all your vices outside. Do not steal any longer! Forsake your bad ways and become a good girl! "

To this the bride's relatives shout in return :

" You have nothing to boast about! Stop wearying the people! She is far too good for you! Does not everybody know the wild pranks of your son and the dishonour of your family! "

And they go on in this way, at first in joke, but often speaking seriously. They sometimes even go so far as to bombard each other with the half digested matter which has been extracted from the goat's stomach, but, if anyone goes too far and exceeds the recognized limit of insult, the old people will tell him to be quiet. 585 535 These proceedings however are looked upon as a game and are accompanied with a particular dance called *khana* which consists in jumping first on one leg and then on the other, gesticulating at the same time.

e) The religious act.

585 782 769 The procession reaches the hut of the bride's mother, where the goat was killed. Mats are stretched outside. The bride and groom sit down on the finest of these. It is now that the father

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

585 578 goat. Shillings must be given to induce her to enter the hut, to sit down, to accept water for washing her hands and food, to eat. Another ox is killed and the meat is divided as follows : the liver and the heart are for the bride's father, the leg for her mother, the *nyimba*, viz. the womb, which includes the ribs, sternum etc. for the maternal uncle. The women, when they return home, take all these pieces of meat to their several destinations. They put a skewer through the heart and liver and stick it into the ground before the bride's father's hut saying : " This is the notification of the husband's people. "

If the total number of the oxen has been remitted on the lobola day, *the departure of the new wife* for the husband's kraal (thloma) will not be long delayed. But should there be some oxen wanting, a wise father will not allow her to go until the whole lobolo has been paid. The husband works hard to get together the other oxen. He brings them, without ceremony, together with a sovereign, which he places before the bride's father as a present, saying : " This is my spitting for you, my father! " He does the same for the mother. He now feels the right to claim his wife. They answer : " Give us time to prepare her trousseau." The trousseau consists of two mats, two or three big spoons, some pots, a wooden platter, a pestle and a mortar, and one hoe provided by the maternal uncle, which make up all the equipment of a Nkuna bride. All her female relations meet and, after having exhorted (1) her to be obedient, to accept all the hardships she will find in her new home, they accompany her to her husband's village. This is the *hloma*. The men do not go, except the ntjumi of the bride's family. The father, on the morning before they leave, kills a fowl and *hahla*, viz. makes a sacrifice, telling his ancestors that his daughter goes to be married, and praying for her. The ntjumi,

585 562 593 (1) " Hear! " the old women say to the bride, " you have been a good girl, so far, henceforth you will be treated as a slave! You will be accused of adultery and of witchcraft. You will have no more happiness. But accept all that! They will beat you, kill you and we shall not be able to deliver you, because we have eaten their oxen. " These exhortations are worth reproducing, as they show clearly the conditions under which the girl goes to her husband. She is not protected by the lobolo. On the contrary, the lobolo has made her the possession of the husband's family, from whom she must now accept any treatment. (See Part II).

585 immediately after his arrival, goes to the husband and to his
378 assembled relatives and tells them roughly : " Here we are ; we bring you your dog. Here it is. With us, she was reputed to be a good girl. Now we shall hear you every day say that she is lazy, does not know how to cook, has a host of lovers... All right! Kill her! Kill your dog! Have you not bought it ? She is a witch! Let her drink the magic philter, etc. " The men keep silent... " Yes, you are right. We shall beat her. But if her husband is too hard on her, we shall try to deliver her. We shall do our best to protect her ".

In the meantime the women cut the logs of the *shigiyane*, and fill the pots with water, and the feast goes on, another ox having been killed by the husband. The married pair sit on a mat and the women of the two families begin the mutual exchange of insults which are never wanting on this day! " You dogs! " one of the aunts of the girl will say, " people of no consequence! You have not even a broken pot to remove the ashes from the fireplace. You can congratulate yourselves on getting such a good wife as this, a hard worker, a splendid cook, a nice and honest girl. " An old woman of the other party answers : " Yes! If you have exhorted her sufficiently! Perhaps she will give up her bad ways, her laziness, etc... "—" Bad ways ? You may well speak of that! Look at your son! What was he? A wild beast! We have come to cut off his tail and make a man of him! "

V. *Marriage by abduction.*

588 The [illegible] ceremonies which we have described belong to
583 the legal marriage (ku teka, ku lobola). But there exists another way of getting a wife, and the poor (psisiwana), those who have no oxen, no pounds sterling for lobola, especially if they have no energy, have recourse to this method. It is called *ku tlhuba*. A young man in such a position, wishing to marry such and such a girl, will send a friend to her and propose a rendez-vous in the

765 782 wizard (a clever man who could overcome death). In what has your witchcraft resulted ? Are you not dead! You have left us in peace. Go to Tlotlomane ; let Tlotlomane go to X ; let X go to Y, etc. (He utters the names of the ancestors.) Call each other to come here and look. Are we not gathered together ? Here is so and so. The batukulu also are here. Accept this offering and may we live peacefully together ; visit each other (Annotatio 11)[1]. Even if they do not come to pay me visits, let them come to Fenis ; he is their father now. And you, Mugwane, you remain at the head of the village. You are their headman now. Do not scatter your people. Cultivate good relations with each other."

765 593 578 But a woman suddenly stands up and interrupts him : "Bring everything to the light," she says! The old priest stops. She goes on : "They say I am a Muchopi" (a woman of dissolute manners). The mikulungwane are heard on all sides. It is a family drama which we are attending! This woman is the daughter of the deceased : Manyibane has sold her to pay off his debts ; he has not kept the lobola money to buy a wife for one of her brothers ; that is the reason why they hate her. They do not receive her in the village. She pours out her grievances before them in this family gathering, when they are praying to their ancestors. It is the favourable time! She goes on : "Is it my fault ? Did I not obey our father ? I have not fled away. Now what am I to do ? He alone received me here! You despise me. Say everything! Do not hide it!"

Her interruption has lasted five minutes at least and she goes back to her place very angry. Sometimes relatives who have serious complaints to make against their kinsfolk choose this precise moment to vent their anger and leave the gathering with violent words. In such a case, it is said : "The mourning has overcome this family."

765 782 The old priest is a little disconcerted. He speaks at random, always calling his Tlotlomane. The whole scene is perfectly natural, but the participants do not show the slightest religious awe. Suddenly one of the batukulu rises, takes a bottle of wine which has been also brought there as an offering, pours a

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1[See p. 518 in these categories or in 46 - Analyst]

837 of his father, which is considered as *biha*, very bad), he must not
684 take any part in the burial, though he might be the regular "master
783 of the mourning." Relatives will drive him away because they
378 have pity on him, they know what misfortune threatens him. It is
782 a terrible taboo! There are medicines to remove this contamination; the *yila* is removed by them, but the *biha* (bad action)
626 remains! However in the case of the disease called *mpondjo*,
753 (which I believe to be the lupus), medicines are of no avail; should a man visit his rival, who is suffering from it, he will die. We have also seen the terrible complications which are believed to take place at the birth of children, when there has been a question of adultery. (P. 40.)

836 These great taboos show that there is a deep feeling amongst the Thongas that promiscuity of any kind is a bad and a dangerous thing. Even in the case of *gangisa*, boys are censured when two of them court the same girl.

10) - Divorce.

586 Adultery is one of the causes of divorce. The guilty woman, instead of obeying her legitimate husband and helping him to get his compensation, may choose to go to her lover and live with him. This leads to an immediate divorce. The husband goes to the parents of the unfaithful wife and claims his lobolo. They have perhaps no money to give. However they will try to get it as soon as possible, even if it is by the dissolution of the marriage of their own son; they will perhaps send back his young wife to her parents and claim the lobolo paid for her, in order to meet the claim of the angry husband (See Part II). It would seem easier to go to the thief and claim from him the lobola for the adulteress whom he has stolen (tlhuba). But a thief is not a reliable man! If he has stolen, it proves that he had nothing (1). (See Appendix VIII.)

Divorce frequently takes place for more trivial reasons, for

548 (1) Women of low morals are called in Ronga gwababana, prostitute. There are plenty of them all round Lourenço Marques, where morality has sunk to a very low level; but this is the result of degeneration.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

586 mere incompatibility of temper. Heathen men are often hard
362 to their wives. They refuse to give them money to buy
378 clothing. "They are stones," said one of these men to me. "Though you scratch a stone with your nail, the nail will break and the stone will remain!" On the other hand, the women are by no means sweet, obedient creatures ; therefore quarrelling often takes place. When she thinks she is persecuted (shanisa), the wife *runs home*. This is her great weapon. The husband heaves a sigh of relief... But very soon he becomes aware of his misfortune. No food, no cooked meal in the evening! His companions share their own food with him for some days, but they will not consent to feed him long. He will have to go modestly, humbly to his parents-in-law and ask his wife to return. Then they enquire into the matter, and he perhaps receives a good scolding. It may be that the domestic life will improve, both fearing the renewal of the conflict. It may however be that the situation will grow worse and worse, and then it will lead to divorce, viz. the husband will claim his money and, when he gets it back, the marriage is dissolved (ku dlawa ka bukati).

An accusation of witchcraft may also cause divorce, especially after the death of a child ; so also can sterility, as we have seen, p. 190. Gross selfishness on the part of the husband may lead to it ; many tales tell the story of a man who in time of famine succeeded in killing an antelope, kept the meat for himself and did not give any to his wife and children. The wife noticed it and, when the famine came to an end, she invited all her relatives to a beer feast. Then she shewed them the bones of the antelope, telling them how badly her husband had treated her ; her parents took her home together with the children. Sometimes the conclusion of the tale is that the man even lost his lobolo money, as a punishment for his evil deed! (See *Grammaire Ronga*, page 202. *Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, page 260.)

11) Widowhood.

783 When a man dies all his relatives are contaminated by the
765 defilement of death, as we have seen (Page 143). There are concentric circles around him, some people being more affected

587/768 Probably this widow was not pleased with the man to whom they had destined her. Seeing more of him during the year, her affection had not increased. On the other hand, she had some liking for one of the *batukulu*, and she arranged secretly with him, and perhaps also with his mother, that she would keep silent till this day and then choose her nephew. It is quite possible that the mother of the *ntukulu* will say in that case: "Has this widow not been bought with the money which I secured for the family by my marriage?" Of course the official suitor objects strongly to this spoliation. He becomes angry. During a whole year he has given clothing to the ungrateful one. Things may grow so bad that the *ntukulu* carries off the fractious widow at once, saying: "Good-bye! I go with my wife!" The old men will then follow him and implore him to come back. If they see that the woman is quite decided, they will allow her to go to the husband of her choice. They had better consent to it at once, because it not infrequently happens that the *ntukulu*, if repulsed that day, will go to the family of the woman and claim the money (*lobola*) paid for her by her late husband, saying: "That *lobola* comes from my mother. If you do not give us our wife, if you allow her to stay with another man, then give us back the money." Or it may happen also that the widow, brought perforce to the house of a younger brother-in-law, will run away to the *ntukulu*, and the rightful husband will be helpless. There is a saying to this effect: "A woman inherited cannot be forced." Of course such cases of conflicting interests cause a great deal of friction between members of the family, and the Natives are much distressed about it; they try to avoid it as much as possible. But the desire of getting one more wife is so strong in the heart of a Ronga that such disputes are by no means rare, and the day of the adjudication of the inheritance is universally dreaded. However, they never go as far as fighting, and if an uncle and a nephew have parted from each other on bad terms, they will very likely try to mend matters by the sacrifice of reconciliation (*hahlelana madjieta*), which is one of the admirable features of the Ronga religion (See Part VI).

587/578/768/428

The widows are truly the most important part of the property

462 888 she has contracted such an intimate union with Mother Earth that she cannot conceive existence away from her gardens, and she crawls to them with her hoe, by a kind of instinct, till she dies.

764 The death of the woman is accompanied by the same rites as the death of a man. I must mention, however, the custom of *mahloko*, which takes place when a woman dies while still in her prime. Mahloko comes from *nhloko*, head. The explanation of this technical word is this : the parents of the woman say : "Our head (viz. a person belonging to us) has died ; let us go to mourn her."

587 578 Let us first see how this mourning takes place *in the Ronga clans.* If the two families were very friendly, the parents of the deceased will probably bring with them a little girl, saying : "This is our little green meat (mbuti), our little orange (rather sala, fruit of the nsala tree)." They offer her to the husband to take the place of the deceased wife, and a new contract will be made. The widower will then at once pay a first part of the lobolo, £ 5 for instance, and, in the course of time, he will marry his sister-in-law. But generally the visitors are angry, and the mahloko ceremony is very unpleasant. It may be that the deceased wife had not been entirely paid for. In that case her parents will come at the end of the mourning to "claim the herd" (ramela ntlhambi).

764 578 754 But though there may be no difficult lobola question in the way, uneasiness is felt, because the brothers of the deceased cannot help thinking that their sister has been killed by witchcraft. It was not yet time for her to die ; so she must have been bewitched by the husband's family, probably by her co-wives, who were jealous of her. When the Great Mourning took place, they hardly came to the mortuary village. One or two went to see their "head," and mourned her in their own kraal. To day, the day of mahloko, they assemble, and throw bones in order to know who will have to speak, who will receive the mahloko money, whether the money has been bewitched ? The whole company starts for the mortuary village, driving a goat before them. They sit down outside in the bush with dark looks ; there is no longer any hut to receive them... They have been noticed by the

764 inhabitants of the kraal. One of them, the saluter (mulosi), goes to meet them and offers them a shilling. They keep silence. He tells them the news of the village. They do not answer. He leaves them and comes a second time with a fresh present. Then they consent to tell the news of their home, but they do not enter the village. The same man returns to them a third time with £ 1 ; they refuse to accept it. He adds 10/. (£ 1.10 is considered the normal sum to be paid as a kind of fine by the widower to the parents of the deceased.) They refuse again : this is an insult! Happily the *ntukulu* is there ; he will act as mediator between the two families. The visitors summoned him on their arrival and he has been sitting with them the whole time ; is he not the son of their sister ? But before he went to them, his father has given him his instructions : "Tell them that I have not eaten your mother." The *ntukulu*, as we shall see, is very free with his maternal uncles. He has the right of teasing them, even insulting them. Seeing that they do not accept the money, he stands and gives vent to his grief, throws sand at them, tries to drive them away, weeps. "No! Father has not killed mother! He is not a wizard! She died a natural death!" They see his tears, and then consent to enter the village.

764 In front of the mortuary hut, all the belongings of the deceased 768 wife have been piled up, together with the straw crown of the hut : 595 her pots, plates, baskets, spoons, mortars, etc. The brothers 782 break everything. Should there be any new implements amongst [578] them, they will perhaps give them to their nieces. Then they lift up the roof of the hut and throw it into the bush. They pick all the plaster from the walls and throw it away where they threw the roof. The sacrifice is then accomplished amidst the ruins of the destroyed hut. Whilst it is being prepared, the women of both families insult each other. The female relatives of the deceased say to the women of the village : "You have killed her because she was a splinter in your eyes" (shilabi). The others answer : "Have you seen us kill her ? Perhaps people do not die with you ?" The *bukwele*, the special jealousy which almost always exists between co-wives, explains how it is possible for them to address such amenities to each other. But the victim is

There is a special term in the Northern clans to indicate the relationship of two men who have married two sisters born of the same mother. They are called : bamakwabu ba shinauma, an expression which is the simplification of the following sentence : shi na wuñwe mamana, i. e. there is only one mother. This term seems to have been borrowed from the Pedis.

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2) Relatives on the mother's side.

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Tobane II calls Mishikombo *mamana*, mother. She is his true mamana and this relation is very deep and tender, combining respect and love. Love however generally exceeds respect. The proper word for tenderness is *timpsalu*, which comes from *psala*, to beget, and the mother is often called *mpsele* (a term which is applied also to the female of all animals). It is the word which answers best to the feelings of a mother for her children. She is generally weak with them and is often accused by the father of spoiling them.

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The mother's sisters are *bamamana* in the second degree, because, if the true mother dies, one of them will probably take care of the children. Their husbands are *batatana* : Phayindi is tatana to Madonge and Muhambi. He calls them *bana*, children. Mboza is also a tatana to Mahlobo and Mathamba, being a makwabu, brother of their father, owing to the fact that he and Phayindi have married sisters.

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All the co-wives are also *bamamana*, mothers by polygamy, (Ñwashihoni and Mishihari to Tobane). They are *bamamana ba shitshengwe*, harem mothers. I respect them but they are further from me than my mother's sisters. A more familiar term for mother, corresponding to roro, father, is *ñwa*, a word always used with the possessive pronoun and only in the second and third person : ñwaku, your mother, ñwakwe, his mother. Ñwaku is employed in certain insults and oaths, and is to be avoided as being vituperative.

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Many other women are mamana : the wife of my paternal uncle (Magugu for Muhambi), though I can inherit her in certain cases ; the daughter of my maternal uncle, because she is the

583 Men are often better than their principles, and we have seen in
562 the study of marriage and inheritance customs that the consent
593 of a girl, and of a widow, is generally asked before any decision takes place. This is done as long as the male masters of the woman have no special interest in the choice. But should they have reason to impose a certain husband upon her, they will not hesitate to force her to accept him ; a young girl will be given up to a dirty old man, for whom she has no liking, on account of a lobola debt of twenty years standing! The lobola hardens the heart and the woman is unable to defend herself. She can always run away. But where will she hide, if all her relatives agree on her being sacrificed to the interest of the family ? Or she can threaten to commit suicide, and she occasionally does so. *b)* She must work for her husband, who gives her very little in return. It is true that she is not a *slave*. She is however *owned*. *c)* This is partly the cause of the shocking difference established between a husband and his wife. The married woman is henceforth absolutely prohibited from adulterous relations — which is a very admirable provision — but her husband is quite free in this respect : he has not been bought.
593 *d)* As regards her children, whatever may be her love for them,
562 she does not in fact possess them. They belong to the father.
586 If divorce takes place and the lobolo is not returned to the husband, he keeps them and the mother will be separated from them for ever (1).

583 2) A second series of consequences arising from this custom
606 are the *strained relations* between the two contracting groups.
578 We have sufficiently insisted on this subject. What makes dealings with parents-in-law so difficult ? It is the lobolo, the sum of money which has perhaps not been Fully paid, and

(1) The Rev. H. Dieterlen, of Basutoland, in a paper on the lobola, wrote the following words, which apply to the Thongas as well as to the Ba-Sutho: "A woman married under lobola bears children but possesses none. The children belong to those who gave the cattle. Whatever may be her own merits, she can see her children pass into the hands of the rawest heathen and be given over to the cupidity of rapacious and rascally relatives. She can be illtreated, driven away, abandoned, repudiated : she will have to live without children ; she will resemble a woman who has never had any. She is not supposed to have the heart and the feelings of a mother. And her children are treated as if they had no filial affection."

583 606 586 578 the debt remains as a permanent cause of irritation. If there is no reason for friction on that point, the threat of quarrels ending in divorce is always impending like the sword of Damocles. If this takes place, the sad event will be made ten times more painful by the terrible dispute which will arise by reason of the lobola being claimed back. And the contending couple will not suffer alone. It may be that another marriage, that of the great mukoñwana, which was perhaps a happy one, will be destroyed in consequence of the divorce. (p. 243) "A ba ruli timbilwin," remarked Mboza. "They don't find peace in their hearts."

These complicated relations due to the lobola poison the whole of native life. Life should be easy for South African Natives. Their wants are few and they have enough to satisfy them under their invariably blue sky. They are generally speaking mild and good-natured. But the lobola question fills the African village with hatred and bitterness. *The milandju*, the debts! Milandju comes from landja, to follow, and this etymology is very instructive. A husband whose wife has gone away must *landja* his wife or rather his money. His whole family will help him in following this property until it has been recovered. Natives will go from one end of the country to the other to follow a few pounds, and at least three quarters of the cases which are brought before the Courts are lobola cases.

As regards the attitude to be adopted towards the Lobola custom, see Practical Conclusions. III.

F. POLYGAMY.

I. *Origin and spread of Polygamy amongst the Thongas.*

595 Polygamy is uniformly practised all through the tribe. This is not to say that every man has many wives ; the automatic rule, by which the number of males is always about equivalent to

595 643 in date. At her death the chief does not perform the incision : the first in date remains the first from the ritual point of view. All these facts show that, for the Thongas, there is a deeper, more mystical conception of matrimony than at first appears, when we consider their present polygamic family. For them, true, complete matrimony is the union of two persons, not of three or ten, and little wives are not much more than concubines. This feeling may very well be explained by the supposition that the race has passed through a previous monogamic phase.

II. *Consequences of polygamy.*

595 A happy consequence of the custom is that, in the primitive Bantu tribe, no disconsolate old maid is to be found. This is no doubt an advantage. I fear, however, that when monogamy sets in, this unblessed singleness will follow in its train.

But the evils of polygamy by far exceed its few advantages!

1) The first is the dreadful development of sexual passion which occurs amongst polygamists. White people who have lived in close touch with Natives in a head kraal where men have many wives, can bear testimony to the frightful excesses in which they indulge. See Annotatio 14, the observations of Dr. Liengme at Gungunyana's residence.

595 578 351 2) A second evil resulting from the custom is the domestic quarrelling which prevails in the villages of polygamists. There is a special term which indicates the peculiar jealousy of a wife towards her co-wives, *bukwele*. The prefix *bu*, in Bantu languages, designates abstract things, ideas, feelings. It is also an indication of place. *Bukwele* therefore also means the special spot between the court yards, where the wives of one man go to insult each other (rukutelana). The story of Leah and Rachel, in the book of Genesis, may give some idea of the reason of such quarrels!

595 578 Sometimes the husband amuses himself by fostering these by no means edifying feelings amongst his spouses. Tobane says : "He will say bad things (psitokoro) to one of his wives, his

1 [See pp. 519-520 in these categories of in 116-Analyst]

595 favourite, about another who is perhaps superior to her. He says
578 to her : 'You are much nicer than so and so! She is not like a woman (A nga twali lepsaku i wansati).' The favourite will make haste to report to her superior what she has heard. She will draw her attention to the fact that the husband calls at her hut more frequently than at the others... The superior becomes angry, and people say of the husband : 'A ni gudjulisana, a ni bandjisana,' 'he makes his wives hit each other.' He himself, after a time, will try to regain the goodwill of the despised one (a ta mu batela). She will violently repel him. He may even kill a chicken to bring about a reconciliation!" One can easily imagine the jealous scenes which occur in the village of a polygamist (1)!

595 3) Polygamy, when practised on a large scale, even brings about *the ruin of the family*. Two examples show this clearly. First the case of Bingwana, to which I have already alluded. He had a great number of wives and used to place them in his various villages, viz., in the capital itself and in all the districts of his kingdom, going round from place to place to visit them. But they were so numerous that he could not visit them Frequently enough and they committed adultery wholesale with the men of these villages. The result was that Bingwana had hundreds of children and that, in the end, he married his own daughters without knowing it. He died tragically. The Gungunyana's yimpis surrounded his fortress (hkokholo). His son, Sipenenyana, fled during the night and he remained alone. He then shut himself up in a hut where he had gathered together his treasures and his gunpowder, set fire to it and died amidst the flames.

The second example is that of Mubvesha who died on Nov. 5 th 1910, a man of weak character, whose intrigues caused the war of 1894-1896 and who was installed by the Portuguese as Chief of the Nondwana country at the close of that war. (See

533 (1) Here is a pretty little Nkuna song about bukwele. A despised wife sings :
595 Rirakara ra mina ri khele hi wanuna,
578 Wanuna a nyika dokori ya kwe !
My nice little pumpkin has been plucked by my husband !
My husband has given it to his favourite !
She sings this song to excite a quarrel... after which she hopes that she will obtain her rights.

622 is taboo for the women to eat it, or the under lip (See p. 184).
596 From each limb a small piece is taken (tshumbuta) and
264 placed on a skewer ; it is the portion of the shepherds and of
554 the butchers, (makotjo ya babyisi). (See the tale of Piti, *Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, page 152). Sometimes the shepherds also receive the lungs and the spleen.

This way of distributing ox meat is called "ku tlhaba homu ba hamba milao," viz., "to kill an ox according to rule." Should a younger brother or a son kill an ox, he will send the breast to the master of the village, but he keeps all the limbs and does not observe the rules because, as he says : "It is enough to pay taxes to the chief of the country." Often one of the legs is sent to the chief of the clan.

Strange to say when a goat is killed none of these prescribed rules are followed, as they only concern the oxen.

622 These customs show clearly the position of the headman ;
596 he is the master but also the father of his subordinates, and their provider.

1) He must *watch* over the village (basopa, Dutch word passop, universally adopted by the Natives). During the night, if his son is away working in Johannesburg, he takes care that no lovers come into the huts of his daughters-in-law, (a langusa bumbuye), and if he happens to catch one, he will make him pay the fine.

622 2) He is a true *justice of peace* amongst the inmates of the
692 village, doing his best to maintain good relations amongst them.
378 Suppose for instance that the pigs belonging to one of the inhab-
685 itants come out of their enclosure and over-run the gardens of another man. This man will go and say to the owner of the pigs :
643 "Such and such a thing has happened, please close the pigs' kraal more carefully." Should the same thing happen a second time, he will complain to the *numzane*. The headman will then go to the culprit and say : "You have not heeded the warning ; you must pay compensation (djiha)." If the culprit listens to the "voice of the blood" (bushaka), he will obey and the matter will end smoothly ; if not, the headman can only keep silent : he has no soldiers, no means of enforcing his judgment ; the plaintiff will then go to the chief of the tribe to complain. The case will be

577 judged before the Court, in the capital, because the offender has
685 refused to follow the way of persuasion, he has "mocked the family
643 love" (a yalile bushaka). Such misdemeanours are very frequent
692 in the life of the village. Most of the Natives bear philosophically with these annoyances. Should some one, however, be really ill-natured, and wear out their patience (wa ku karata), he will be
685 forced to build a hut for himself, alone, outside the village. If the
672 damage is done by *children*, if they have stolen sweet potatoes, as
622 we have seen, the wronged proprietor gives them a good thrash-
732 ing but does not claim a fine. Occasionally the headman himself
689 thrashes them in presence of their father, and the father will say to them: "You see the numzane will beat you if you are not good." Children who mock at cripples are also severely beaten by him, all the more so as, in this case, the offended party has the right of claiming a fine.

622 3) The headman also possesses *authority over his younger brothers*
596 *and his children*. He can even confiscate their money if one of
675 them is addicted to drinking and ruins his property. However his authority in this respect must not be overstepped, and the headman must take care how he exercises it, as it is based more or less on sufferance. The younger brothers, for instance, maintain the right of making contracts, especially lobola contracts. Should the numzane restrict their liberty too much, they will leave him and found their own villages. A successful headman is he who knows how to keep the whole family together to the general satisfaction.

622 4) The headman has also the right of imposing *statute labour*,
596 especially when the oxen kraal must be rebuilt, or when the
466 weeds must be removed from the hubo ; he sends his young men to do the work. But he must not exact too much from his people or forget to feast them with beer or with meat when the work is finished.

622 5) Lastly the headman *presides over all the discussions* which take
596 place in the village. He is the master of the hubo. The discussion can be conducted in three different places ; when it deals with a secret matter, the men go *inside the hut* : they debate the matter indoors (ba bulabula ndlwen). Private questions

power belongs to me." Run, go and tell Mpapalati : "The power is mine." Run, go and tell Mulondjo : "The power is mine!" (1)

Such is the laudatory song of Mawewe, one of the great men at the Nkuna court. Undoubtedly this is one of the best examples of Thonga poetry and a characteristic piece of primitive literature. In the savage tribe the mbongi is the prototype of the poet laureate of civilised Courts. But there is yet another functionary to be considered, whose dutie sare still more strange than those of the herald.

IV. *The Public Vituperator.*

(Shitale sha tiko.)

This is a kind of Court Jester who has the right of casting the vilest insults, the most disgraceful accusations in the teeth of any and all the Natives of the country. He never abuses strangers, but as long as he confines his vituperations to his own countrymen, he enjoys perfect immunity.

Even the chief is not safe from his attacks ; he dares to say anything! "Just see him arriving in your village," said Tobane to me, in his picturesque language. "He begins shouting out the most frightful things. He accuses you of incest, of taking your own sisters as wives! Even if he sees you talking to your 'great sister-in-law,' whom your wife's brother married with your oxen, whom you treat with the greatest respect, he will not hesitate to pass remarks which will make you blush with shame! He will go and take the food you are cooking, will even snatch from the chief's hands the meat he is eating... So, when you see him coming to your village, you hasten to meet him and take him a present to try and avoid having to listen to his horrible insults. Sometimes the *shitale* of the country behaves

(1) Quotation of the words of Muhlaba himself, who sent messengers to all his uncles, to all the petty chiefs under him, to announce officially that he had assumed the chieftainship.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

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himself quite nicely, stays in his own village and attends the national assemblies as quietly as any other person, but, once he begins to rattle off his vituperations, beware! Nothing will stop him! He respects nothing, human or divine!" The Court Jester is of undoubted Thonga origin, as old as the tribe itself, according to Tobane. The position is official and even hereditary. At Zihlahla it was Nwachapane who held the extraordinary post of Public Vituperator. In Nondwane it was Mutjunkwa of the Shibindji family. He insulted the chief with the word : "Musathanyoko." There was also a woman who dared to do the same to Maphunga.

Phot. P. Berthoud.
Molwele, the dwarf.

It is difficult to understand the raison d'être of this strange institution. Is the *shitale* a public censor, to whom the tribe entrusts the privilege of calling attention to facts which others would not dare to bring to light ? Is there some analogy between this "fool" of an African Court and Triboulet ? (1) I cannot say.

(1) In this connection I reproduce from a photograph, taken at Shiluvane in 1885, the portrait of a remarkable personage who was not a Thonga but a Pedi, a subject of the chief Maaghe. Although this extraordinary dwarf did not act officially as the Vituperator, he was widely famed for his witty sayings and his incomparable mimicry. The Native Commissioner took him to Pretoria and Johannesburg some years ago as a curiosity, and it seems that he was exhibited for money ! The name of this little man is Molwele, a veritable ethnographic phenomenon, although he is not exactly the Public Vituperator of the country.

683 754 1906, I ventured to suggest certain means of checking the *buloyi* superstition. The Department of Native Affairs might give the following directions to its subordinates, the Native chiefs:

1) The crime of buloyi is not recognised under penal law.

2) The Native chiefs are prohibited from trying any buloyi case.

3) The plaintiff must be reprimanded as disturbing the peace of the country.

4) The witch doctor or mungoma (magician), who pretends to have smelt out a wizard, must be fined as using his authority to deceive people and foster hatred amongst them.

5) No evidence based on the use of divinatory bones must be accepted.

These rules, if strictly enforced and combined with Christian teaching and the progress of civilisation, will in the course of time put an end to the scourge of witchcraft.

683 695 578 *Insults.* Ku rukana or ruketela, to hurl insults at each other's head, is very frequent amongst Thongas and does not lead to any judicial case, if not accompanied by assault and bruises (1). There are however insulting deeds which are considered as crimes. To take human blood, or spittle, or excrement with a stick and to push it into the mouth of a child, for instance, is considered a very serious insult which must be judged before the Court. A man who committed such an offence would have to pay a fine amounting to a whole lobola. I heard of a woman, who gave a child a butterfly to eat. The parents of the little one were very angry. She denied having done such a thing. They said to her: "Confess your sin and pay a fine of 5/—." She refused and offered to undergo the ordeal, viz., to drink the mondjo philtre. "If you insist" said they, "you will have to pay £ 10." However she persisted and became intoxicated; this was a proof of her guilt. She was fined to the amount of £ 40, £ 20 for the child and £ 20 for the chief!

683 201 754 To point at any one with the index finger is also a grave insult which may have judicial consequences, because this action is brought into close relation with *buloyi*.

683 578 695 (1) The most common insult which women can cast in each other's teeth is ntlhaŋhwaku (Ro) or nyaŋhwaku (Nkuna) which means: the genitals of your mother. A scuffle with blows is sure to arise when that word has been pronounced. It is also used when taking an oath. Men swear by the name of their chief.

726 and Mahazule, who had taken refuge in Gaza, during July-August 1895.
175 Nine regiments, representing a large effective force, were to start from Manzimehlope, the country beyond the Nkomati River ; three of these were to ascend the left bank of the river, to cross it in the neighbourhood of Komati-Poort and to enter Swaziland, the Ngoni chief having made alliance with the Swazis. The other regiments were to cross the Nkomati to the West of the Sabie, and thence to go southward by Moveni. The remaining three, with whom were incorporated Zihlahla and Mahazule, were to ravage Shirindja, Ntimane and Nondwane, passing about one hour's march to the West of Lourenço Marques, exterminating the inhabitants of Matjolo (allies of the Whites), whose retreat to the town would be thus cut off... The nine regiments were to effect a junction at a place called Nkobotlwene, to the South of the Bay, where the forces of Gungunyana would fraternise with those of Maputju, with whom they were on good terms. For the space of seven months, tens of thousands of these warriors were to overrun the country
726 and to annihilate all the tribes opposed to Gungunyana. The chief
609 would not massacre the Whites, nor would he attack their town : he
173 calculated on rendering them powerless by depriving them of the assistance of their Black allies, and expected them thus to sue for peace on honourable terms! Such, at least, was the plan of campaign which transpired after Gungunyana had been made prisoner, in the centre of his own country of Gaza, by a party of about forty White soldiers! The whole thing culminated in a single day's skirmish in the Ntimane country. The petty chiefs quarrelled amongst themselves ; only a few hardy warriors dared to cross the Nkomati and slaughtered some women at a short distance from the outpost of Chinabane. Finding themselves discovered, they at once recrossed the river and made off to the Northward.

578 The principal causes of the incapacity in military matters so noticeable amongst the Blacks during the war of 1894-1896, are doubtless the *internal jealousies* between the tribes and also, it must be said, the mysterious dread inspired by the White race, their artillery and their superior discipline.

726 The feeling of mistrust existing between Matjolo and Nwamba,
175 Nondwane, Zihlahla and Shirindja, also explains the terrible *panics*
703 which occured during the military operations. On several occasions the Native forces were subject to panics which might have entailed the most serious results. As an instance I relate the following, which nearly led to the partial destruction of the Matjolo army. The Matjolo

727 "hot" and from special plates (mireko) and broken pots. They are
783 forbidden to drink water. Their food must be cold. The chief
834 kills oxen for them (yi ba lumisa hi tihomu); but if the meat
761 were hot it would make them swell internally "because they are hot themselves, they are defiled (ba na nsila)." If they ate hot food, the defilement would enter into them. "They are black (ntima). This black must be removed" (Mankhelu). During all this time sexual relations are absolutely forbidden to them.

727 They must not go home to their wives. In former times the
304 Ba-Ronga used to tatoo them with special marks from one eyebrow to the other. Dreadful medicines were introduced into the incisions and there remained pimples "which gave them the appearance of a buffulo when it frowns" (1).

789 After some days a medicine-man comes to purify them (ku ba
727 phutula), "to remove their black." There seem to be various
783 means of doing it, according to Mankhelu. Seeds of all kinds are put into a broken pot and roasted, together with drugs and *psanyi* of a goat. The slayers inhale the smoke which emanates from the pot. They put their hands into the mixture and rub their limbs with it (ba tilula) especially the joints.

789 Viguet describes this last act thus :—Pieces of medicinal roots
727 are put into the broken pot and roasted. They inhale the smoke.
782 Then cow's milk is poured into the pot on the embers and, when it boils, they have to put their fingers into it, one hand after the other, and pass them across their lips emitting the sacramental : "tsu" (which proves that it is a sacrifice to the gods, a religious act). Afterwards they say : "Phee! phee!" — viz.,
789 phephela phansi, (Dj. tikela hansi), "Go down, sink." This
727 means : "May you go deep into the earth, you, my enemy and
783 not come back to torment me." The last part of the treatment consists in rubbing the biceps, the legs, and the whole body with this milk. The medicinal embers are carefully collected, and reduced to a powder ; this will be put into small bags of skin called *tintebe* which the slayer will wear round his neck. They contain

578 (1) Hence an expression which is still in common use. When a Ronga wants to defy some one he says to him : "You are a coward! If you say you can tackle me come and kiss my forehead."

I [i.e., the slayers returned from battle --Analyst]

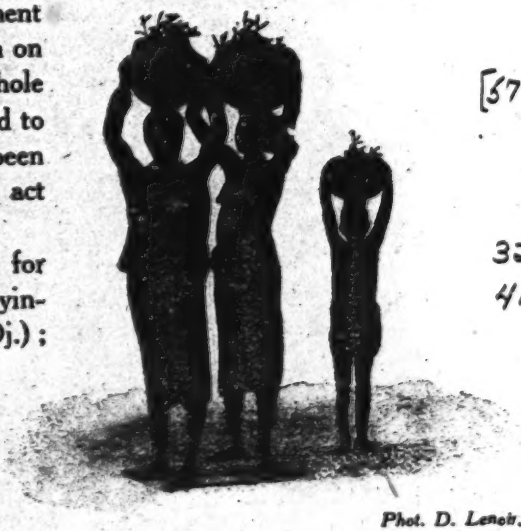
423 622 already been tilled and abandoned as exhausted. I noticed this at Rikatla. Muzila favoured his pagan subjects, who joined him in his drinking bouts, and invited him to orgies in their villages, at the expense of the Christians who no longer brew the byala beer. Thus interest at Court works here as elsewhere, although it be based on nothing nobler than pots of beer!

423 578 692 The difficulties of this system also become apparent in the more thickly populated parts of the country, where all the land has been assigned and taken up. The women look round for fresh arable land and may, wittingly or unwittingly, encroach on the ground of another numzane. There is, indeed, a neutral zone, vaguely defined, of which no one has as yet taken possession, as it has not been needed : the wild fruits growing there are common property ; any one who likes can gather them. When the population increases, the inhabitants of the more congested districts go and appropriate this land without any kind of formality. Such was the case when the people of Libombo, dwelling on the edge of the palm-marsh, (to the East of Rikatla), sent their women to the hill-side to clear a piece of land which Muzila considered to be his property. This petty chief sent remonstrances to Nkolele, his colleague, headman of the village of Libombo ; but they were not heeded. Then the men of Rikatla hid themselves in the bushes surrounding the spot in question, and, when the women commenced to hoe the ground, rushed out upon them, seized their hoes, and drove them off. This was the "fait patent," the actionable proceeding, which was necessary in order to have the matter brought before the Chief's tribunal. This incident doubtless led the parties interested to define their respective boundaries more carefully.

423 618 To go and till another's land would be quite impossible, even taboo, between people of different clans. In the present case, the Rikatla and Libombo men belonged to the same Nondwane country. There was a good understanding between them. The Rikatla men would not have dared to plough a field without permission on Mabota's ground, the boundary of which was on the other side of the big water-tree (muhlu).

As regards *boundary marks* between the different clans, they

Another taboo in connection with the making of a pot is this: when a pot has been fired, it must still be *tested*; this operation is called *ku khangula*, or *kwangula*, and is performed in the following way. A little water is poured into it, and the potteress washes it thoroughly; then some grains of maize are cooked in it and thrown away. This is to remove the *nkwangu*, or *nkhangu*, viz., the danger attending the use of an untested, unpurified pot: people using such an implement would suffer from an eruption on the arms, and even on the whole body. To give any one food to eat from a pot which has not been *khangula* is looked on as an act of hatred.



Phot. D. Lenoir.

Pots used to draw water.

The pot, or boiler, used for cooking is called *nhlambeto* (yin-tin, Ro.) or *mbita* (yin-tin Dj.); it has a very wide opening. Smaller boilers are also made, even quite diminutive ones called *shihlembetwana* or *shimbitana*. The beer jar (khuwana, dji-ma), illustrated on page 101, No. 13, is of the same size as the boiler, but can be easily recognised by its straighter neck. Enormous beer jars are sometimes manufactured, perfect amphoras (hotjo, yin-tin), but they rarely stand the firing and are therefore scarce and expensive, fetching as much as ten shillings each: they may be two feet high; the ordinary cooking pot does not cost more than sixpence. The porringers, or large plates, are called *mbenga* (mu,-mi; No. 12) (1).

Shibindji clay is also used for making very short *pipes* (shipana), prettily shaped, probably in imitation of the European cutty. Smoking does not seem to be an indigenous habit; in the interior

(1) No. 11, on page 101, shows a small vase modelled by a young Native girl, an invalid from Natal (Station of Inanda).

821 star is directing its course, and they have a formula of incantation
787 to get rid of the misfortune attending this phenomenon. They
789 say : "Thu! Thu! Nkulunkulu ndjuwee, famba psa ku u nga fa u ku bi." — "You great thing, go away alone (without me, leaving me behind) and die and disappear entirely." This is more an imprecation (shiruketelo) than an incantation. The syllable *thu* indicates, and accompanies, the emission of a little saliva. It is different from the sacramental *tsu*, employed to invoke the spirits of the ancestors : it is an insult. It is spitting *at* something, not an act of respect and an offering, like *tsu* (1). This is the Ronga formula ; the one used in Northern clans has the same meaning : "*Rura, rura weshe*" (Move, move alone!).

821 *Comets* greatly impress the imagination of the Thongas ;
787 they are called *shimusana*, or *nyeleti ya musana*, the star of dust, or *nyeleti ya nkila*, the star with a tail, and when they appear they also mean the death of a chief. People say : "See ! A chief has died, but they have not yet published the mourning" (I. p. 414). The star which is said to have appeared the year of the death of Manukosi was probably a comet. (See Report of the S.A.A.A.S. 1905, Vol. III, p. 232.)

772 These few superstitions and observations comprise all the Astronomy of the Thongas. The sidereal world is almost entirely outside the range of their preoccupations.

III. *Cosmographic and Meteorological Phenonomena.*

1) The Wind.

821 The wind is called *moya*, an interesting word which means
822 also spirit (the human breath and the spiritual part of man), and is applied to the acting, living agent, or to the smell, or taste, of some objects. For instance it is said of an alcoholic beverage

861 (1) They spit at a child who is causing an unpleasant smell, saying to him : "Thu ! u ya tinyela matjimba." — "Go away to ease yourself." Should you do this to a
578 person older than yourself, he will say to you : "What ! you make *thu* to me (wa ndji tjhuka), you want me to ease myself !"

834 place at a given spot and according to a given order of precedence.
783 This will bring about the definite restoration of the village and a new and pure life will henceforth be possible.

761 I ought perhaps to offer some excuse for having dwelt at some
827 length on a subject which is generally left alone as indelicate. I hope however that my readers will agree with me that all these physiological conceptions and all these strange customs, far from being of a lascivious or licentious character, denote, on the contrary, a deep and earnest conception of life and an aspiration towards purity which it is most interesting to observe. They are at the same time amongst the most striking manifestations of Bantu Dynamism.

827 Beside these great principles of Thonga physiology, I may
576 mention a few other ideas relating to the various secretions of the human body.

578 *Spitting* (ku thuka) is a sign of want of respect, as we have seen (p. 310). It is especially prohibited in the presence of people who are eating, and if any one should spit, they will insult the culprit, saying to him : "Eat your own shikohlolo!" — When some one expectorates, others present will cover the phlegm with sand, not on account of taboo, but from disgust.

826 *Blood* (ngati, yin-tin) is also instinctively covered with sand, as
791 soon as it has been shed. This is a taboo, because wizards might use it to bewitch you! The charms of the wizards are commonly called *tingati*, bloods.

827 As regards *sweat* (nyuku, mu-mi), although I cannot assert that the idea is universal, I think it is conceived as coming from outside and falling on men like the dew (mbere) on the grass. When they enter a place which is close, Natives say : "There is sweat here." The etymology of this word is *ku nyuka*, to melt.

Excrement (matjimba) is looked upon as disgusting, but there is no taboo in connection with it.

Yawning (yahlamula) is attended with no superstition.

Hiccough (shitikwane) is not feared in children, but very much so in the case of sick people.

Belching (bisa) is sometimes considered as the result of having been bewitched, especially if the patient becomes thin. . Magicians

782 To these words is generally added an invocation to the medicine-
756 man's gods, who are entreated to bless the drugs they have given
to their descendant, and to join with the traveller's gods in order
484 to insure his success in this undertaking. The decoction is then used to wash the body of the young man. He will pay the fee on his return home.

224 *Offerings of Hunters.* This is called *byalwa bya ngenge*; the beer
782 of ngenge. This beer is made of maize grains which have been crushed but not softened by long steeping in water, as is generally
273 done in brewing ; they are then reduced to flour ; some water is poured on this and it is offered in that form by the head hunter, all his companions standing near him. They must start at once ; there is therefore no time to brew proper beer.

484 *Offerings of Travellers.* These also have their particular mhamba,
782 which is called *Lehika*. It consists of water alone which the officiant takes in his mouth and spits out, saying : "*Pff!*" (amongst the Hlengwes : "*Phaaa*"). "My ancestor-gods! May I find no difficulty
578 on my road, etc." This *water offering* is also made by a headman
782 whose village is troubled by endless disputes. The way of bringing them to an end is not clear. So he entreats his gods to "open the road, pfula ndlela," so that all hearts may be relieved. This will help him to "herd his village, ku byisa muti." The idea of finding a road clearly accounts for the fact that this offering is made under two sets of circumstances so different from one another. Why water is used to attain this end I do not know.

The offerings hitherto described bear a more or less individual character. Let us now consider those which are in direct relation to the life of the family.

782 *Regular Family Sacrifices.* We have seen these performed in
842 connection with the most important events in life. At the *weaning* (I. p. 58, this might however be termed a medical sacrifice), *on the marriage day*, either publicly, as amongst the Ronga clans (I. p. 110), or privately, by the bride's father alone, as is the custom amongst the Nkunas (I. p. 118). The gods are entreated to give the newly married woman "timbeleko," births, i. e., children, as it seems that the power of begetting depends directly
000 on the gods. Regular acts of worship are performed also at the

782 previously selected, and throws it on the boy's luggage. The
783 victim leaps about (phuphumela) in its agony. The officiant then
484 plucks out some of the bloodstained feathers, pronounces the tsu, and says :

> Here is your son. He has returned home safely, because you have accompanied him! Perhaps he has brought back pounds sterling with him to lobola. Perhaps he will now take a wife! I do not know. The great thing is that he is healthy, and you have brought him back safely.

782 *The Offering of Reconciliation.* One of the most curious of
578 the religious acts performed in connection with the family is
593 called *ku hahlela madjieta*, viz., to perform a sacramental act in connection with the madjieta. *Djieta* (dji-ma) means a *rash oath*, or an oath *with imprecation*. If two brothers quarrel, and the younger believing himself to be the injured one, breaks off all connection with his brother, he may say to the latter in his anger : "Never will I speak to you again, or come any more to your village!" This is a djieta. To give greater weight to the imprecation, the angry brother will put his nail beneath one of his incisor teeth, push it from within outwards and say : "U ta kota u *ñwoo* psi nga yentshekanga!" This probably means : "May you die if this does not happen," viz. if I do not keep my oath. Or he will pinch up the skin below his eye, and pull it out, saying : "U ta kota wao *hum*!" (Same meaning). The two men may remain for years without the slightest intercourse with each other. But if a serious disease should break out in the village of the younger, and the bones order him to make an offering, he is at once in a difficulty. He has no right to present it himself, for, according to the great law of priesthood in ancestrolatry, it is his elder brother who must do it for him. The bones, on being again consulted, give the response : — "There is something in the way. You two have tied a knot. Untie it first, then offer the sacrifice." The younger brother will then go to the elder, and say : "I have sinned in swearing that I would never come again to your village. Let us hahlela djieta, i. e., accomplish the sacrificial act, which will

cancel the rash oath (1). The elder will scold him severely, but will eventually accept his excuses. This meeting for confession and reconciliation is called ku hahlela madjieta, even if no other act, no *tsu*, or prayer, is performed. — The reconciliation may, however, be celebrated in a more solemn manner by a ceremony, which is attended by the elder members of the family. The brother who pronounced the imprecation prepares a decoction of a special herb, called mudahomu, and pours it into a sala shell. Everyone assembles on the square, and the two former enemies sit in the midst, on the bare ground. The offender raises the shell to his lips, sips the decoction, spits it out with the customary tsu, and says : "This is our djieta. We pronounced it, because our hearts were bitter. To-day it must come to an end. It is right that we make peace." The other brother, the offended one, then takes the shell, and after going through the same rite of the tsu, says : "I was justly angry, because it was he who first offended me! But let it be ended to-day ; let us eat out of the same spoon, drink out of the same cup, and be friends again." Then he breaks the shell, and they drink and enjoy themselves together.

In the Northern clans this offering is called *byalwa bya huwa, the beer of noise* (on account of the noise made by those who quarelled). It is considered as necessary, not only to reconcile the estranged brothers, but as a protection against wizards. Wizards might be encouraged to bewitch these men, thinking that, if one of them met with misfortune, people would say that his brother had cast a spell over him ; the wizards would then have an opportunity of killing him without fear of being discovered! The offering consists of *many sorts of cereals*, mealies, millet, sorgho taken from the granaries of all those who have fought ; two handfuls of the

(1) See also my article on "The Sacrifice of Reconciliation" amongst the Ba-Ronga (*South African Journal of Science*, February 1911). The djieta is any rash oath, and not only one pronounced against a brother. If a man swears that he will never enter a pool again (because he has been stung), or a river (because he has been followed by a crocodile), it is likewise a *djieta*. Should he find it necessary to enter this lake or this river again, he must first hahlela djieta, i. e. cancel his oath by a sacramental act. This is not necessarily a prayer to his gods, but only an invocation addressed to the imprecation itself: "You djieta, I said I would enter this lake no more, but I want to *tjeba* (p. 86) and to eat fish! Don't cause me to suffer for it." Then he takes some water in his hands, and throws it into the pool.

578 grains are brought to the altar and thrown on to it and the brothers
782 who wish to be reconciled recount their grievances. The offering,
593 though called beer of noise, is not really beer at all, (the cereals offered are not ground nor cooked). However, as my informant said, it is truly beer, as these raw cereals *represent* beer. Natives do not think that they have said anything contradictory in expressing themselves in this way! Notice the fact that these cereals are collected from all the granaries (Tembe). In the same manner the members of the whole family must be reconciled.

782 The same offering is resorted to in *cases of protracted births*
846 (I. p. 40) when it is known that the woman in labour lived on bad
578 terms with another woman. The latter will be called ; she will take a little water in her mouth and spit it out against the hypogastrium of the other, saying *phaa* with the following words : "The angry words which we have spoken must come to an end. May you find help. (Lepsi hi nga bulabula psi fanele ku hela, u pfuneka)". This prayer will not be accompanied by an invocation of the ancestor-gods of either of these women. A similar ceremony is performed when the bones have revealed that delay in parturition or in the child's taking the maternal breast is due to the *bitterness* of its parents in their previous relations. The diviner will tell the father "Hahlela shibiti, make an offering on account of bitterness." This will be performed in the hut. The father will come, and without putting anything into his mouth he will say *tsu* and add the following words : "Let her give birth to the child! What I had (in my heart) I have left! Let us be united again. (A a beleke! Lepsi ndji nga na psu ndji psi tjikile! Hi tlhangana kambe)." In this case the offering is also called an offering of bitterness, though it is very different from the one previously described under that name.

782 *Offering of "the Big millet" (mabele makuku).* The millet (mabele or ñwahuba) is the smallest of the cereals cultivated by the Thongas ; this offering, however, is called "big" on account of its importance and its character. It is a true *thanksgiving offering*. When the family has special cause for rejoicing, for instance if there has been serious illness and the patient has recovered, all its members are called together for the offering of the "big millet."

consider in the choice of his wife is that she should not belong to a family of witches. The accusation : "You are a noyi"[1], is the gravest insult which one man can utter to another (1).

The activity of the baloyi is almost entirely nocturnal. For this reason they are sometimes called by the euphemism : "ba busiku" — "the men of night." In fact, they possess the faculty of getting out of themselves at night time ; they have large wings, and, after having left their huts by the crown of grass which covers the top, or by the closed door, they fly through the air and betake themselves to their horrible work.

As they are active in the darkness of night a connection is established between them and nocturnal birds, especially *owls* (kuhunu). When the sinister cry of this bird is heard, men take a torch upon which they have spit out of their mouths a little ndjao powder, and chase away the creature. Baloyi are also identified with the little moving lights sometimes seen in the marshes, the will-o'-the-wisps, the fires of the night (mindjilo ya busiku), the belief being that these fires are either the baloyi themselves, or that they are sent by the baloyi as a threat (2). We have seen (p. 720) that the wizards who ride on hippopotami during the night are credited with the power of producing flames similar to lamps.

Two questions here arise. Does the Native mind imagine that

(1) Thongas are extremely sensitive in regard to a possible suspicion that they are baloyi. When I proposed to my pupils in the Shiluvane Institution that they should move up for the bad season to the sanatorium which we had set up in the mountains, in order to avoid the dangers of fever in the Low Country, not wishing to abandon their comfortable accomodation at the station, they made great difficulties. I therefore said to them : "But if your devoted teacher, Miss So and So, catches the fever, on account of the heat and moisture of the malarial climate, will you not be responsible for whatever may happen?" This remark caused quite a commotion amongst the pupils. "What?" they said. "We are then baloyi ! We have the power of killing people by witchcraft !"

(2) One of my informants says : "We are walking peacefully along the path at night-time, chatting pleasantly with our companions. Suddenly a will-o'-the-wisp appears. We at once stop on seeing this terrible object, for one of us must be the culprit. It cannot arise from any other cause. We organise a meeting for confession (rerela nyiwa, see below), and thus rebuke the noyi who is amongst us. Sometimes people who see the fires of the night trample on the ground, take a pinch of earth between their fingers and put it to their mouths (khabuta)." (This may be a kind of "mhamba" similar to that described on page 391, aimed at obtaining protection against the "enemies of the earth.")

[1] [literally "caster of spells" -- See pp. 504 ff., cat. 116-Analyst]